

**36th Meeting of the Standing Committee
26-28 June 2006**

Agenda Item 7(ii)

**Elements for UNHCR's oral update to the 2006 substantive session of the
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

Summary

1. UNHCR has been actively engaged in support of the ambitious initiatives currently under way towards reform of the UN system as well as the improvement of global humanitarian response capacity. These include the follow-up, through the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)**, to last year's humanitarian response review as well as the follow-up to the **high-level segment** of the 60th session of the General Assembly. UNHCR is also contributing to several other initiatives, including the Secretary-General's high-level panel on **system-wide coherence** and the improvement of the planning process for **integrated missions**.
2. The inter-agency dialogue on improving the collaborative response to internal displacement became subsumed in the second half of 2005 within the "**cluster leadership approach**," a new arrangement elaborated within the IASC and aimed at briefing greater predictability, accountability and capacity to emergency management and early recovery. Although the new approach is not limited to internally displaced persons (IDPs), UNHCR's own participation is focused on this dimension. With the support, advice and encouragement of its Executive Committee, UNHCR has exerted itself to contribute to the conceptual development and practical roll-out, at the headquarters and field level, of the cluster approach, in which UNHCR has the lead role in protection, camp coordination/camp management and emergency shelter for IDPs in situations of forced displacement. The new approach is already providing a much improved framework for the exercise of the General Assembly mandates given to UNHCR on IDPs.
3. UNHCR continues to be fully engaged in other key coordination bodies, including the **Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA)** and the **United Nations Development Group (UNDG)**. With its partners in **UNAIDS**, UNHCR continued to work to combat HIV/AIDS among refugees and other persons of concern. Cooperation with fellow UNAIDS co-sponsors aimed at ensuring the inclusion of persons of concern within host countries' HIV/AIDS policies and programmes. Together with **UNFPA**, UNHCR also sought to address the interaction between sexual violence, denial of protection and HIV/AIDS by expanding support to six country programmes in providing post-exposure prophylaxis for rape victims. The Office furthermore worked in partnership with other UN agencies to implement a structured programme to address the issue of HIV/AIDS in the workplace.
4. Bilateral collaboration and coordination with a large number of agencies continues to be a key feature of the implementation of UNHCR's mission. Joint, high-level advocacy with **WFP** yielded positive results in covering the serious gaps in funding of food aid for refugees in a number of countries. In early 2006, the High Commissioner joined the WFP and **UNICEF** Executive Directors in a mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda, to bring attention to the needs of the internally displaced, refugees and returnees in the Great Lakes region. UNHCR has also been invited to serve on the Advisory Board of the initiative led by UNICEF and WFP to help reach the second target of the first MDG, i.e. to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger in 2015.

5. The Office continued to collaborate with **FAO** in joint needs assessments and the promotion of food security for refugees. A joint letter on strengthening cooperation was signed in 2005. In 2006, UNHCR's partnership with **ILO** has focused on specific activities in a number of countries, including Angola, Liberia and Chad, as well as work on a possible ILO-FAO-UNHCR initiative for recovery in priority post-conflict situations.

6. In 2005, a total of 780 **UN Volunteers** (over 13 per cent of the total number of UNHCR staff in the Field) were deployed to 70 operations, as compared to 677 deployments in 2004. A comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding was concluded between UNDP and UNHCR in 2005 on the UN Volunteer programme.

7. **IOM** is a key partner for UNHCR in operations around the globe and co-leads the inter-agency cluster on camp coordination and camp management (IOM takes the lead in natural-disaster situations while UNHCR is the lead in cases of forced displacement). New modalities for bilateral coordination have been put in place including a working group focusing on the asylum-migration nexus in North Africa. UNHCR's cooperation with **ICRC** is also of crucial importance to both organizations. Following their annual high-level meeting in June 2006, it was agreed to send a joint message to the staff of both organizations worldwide, outlining the principles guiding their cooperation and detailing its expected level and scope. UNHCR's cooperation with the **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** was enhanced by the cooperation of the two organizations in the leadership of the inter-agency cluster on emergency shelter.

8. UNHCR's partnership with **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** continues to move beyond the traditional core operative arrangements to a much more comprehensive collaboration, including the active involvement of NGOs from the assessment and planning stages of UNHCR operations through to the implementation and evaluation phases. NGOs have also joined UNHCR in revising various guidelines and policies, for example on refugees and asylum-seekers in urban areas. As cluster lead for protection, emergency shelter and camp coordination and camp management, UNHCR has sought input from NGOs to map capacities and gaps in each of these clusters. In order to facilitate cooperation in the delivery of protection in IDP operations, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNHCR and the **Norwegian Refugee Council** in May 2006.

9. In 2005, the Office channelled over one fifth of its annual budget into partnerships with some 645 NGOs, of which 480 were national. The bulk of this funding covered education; legal assistance/protection; health and nutrition; shelter/other infrastructure; community services; and transport/logistics. NGOs are a critical part of humanitarian operations and UNHCR strives to improve and build on the NGO-UNHCR relationship continuously. To this end, the Office began a review of its grants management process. Furthermore, the Office is piloting a project in four countries – Jordan, Liberia, Malaysia and South Africa – to strengthen UNHCR's management of its partnership with national NGOs and to integrate strategies to build their capacity into operational programmes.

10. More information on UNHCR's our work in collaboration with NGOs and other partners may be found in the Global Report on UNHCR's activities in 2005.